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THE FRIDAY LETTER

Vol. 12 No. 19

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October 5, 1990

FNS Receives Award from UCOWF

by Judy Snow, SWRO

"But we do not intend to rest on our laurels."

That's how Administrator **Betty Jo Nelsen** accepted the **Dorothy M. Forney Memorial Award**--a prestigious award presented by the United Council on Welfare Fraud (UCOWF).

"In the short time that I have served as administrator," **Nelsen** added, "I have found that people come to work for FNS because here they can combine their need to work with their desire to help poor people."

The **Forney Award** presentation took place at UCOWF's annual training conference in San Antonio, Texas, September 23-27. The UCOWF is an organization of over 2,500 agencies and individuals interested in combating fraud. Education sessions on a wide range of categories--from management aspects of fraud control to investigative issues--were offered at this 18th annual conference.

In his welcome, **Robert Bumbalough**, UCOWF President and Assistant Commissioner for Assessment and Investigation for the Tennessee Department of Human Services said, "Our goal is to delve into areas of inves-

tigating welfare fraud to help you gain insight into better and more effective ways to perform your daily job tasks."

While conference attendees were picking up this job-related knowledge, they also could work toward becoming certified welfare fraud investigators. The UCOWF Certification Board is still in its early stages but already 235 investigators are certified nationwide--and each must attend 20 hours of approved continuing education for recertification each year. Twenty-eight continuing education sessions were held at this conference.

Marilyn Carpenter, Food Stamp Program's State Administrations Branch Chief, represented the agency on a panel giving the federal perspective of important issues for the 1990's. She and **Nelsen** also joined the National Association of State Welfare Directors who held a half-day meeting at the conference. After an exchange on food stamp trafficking and tax intercept, **Nelsen** left the meeting with a list of five FNS "to do's" to strengthen integrity in the program.

It is evident that **Nelsen** is not going "to rest on her laurels," or allow FNS employees to do so either.



Bertini and Ng in Alaska

Assistant Secretary Goes to the Arctic Circle

by Dee Amaden, WRO

As part of her first visit to the Western Region in early September, Assistant Secretary **Catherine Bertini**, accompanied by Western Region Food Stamp Program Director **Allen Ng**, flew to Fairbanks, Alaska to address the first convention of the Alaska Chapter of National Eligibility Workers. **Catherine** met with State staff working with the WIC and Food Stamp programs, and had the opportunity of a lifetime to visit the Alaskan bush.

Catherine and **Allen** flew in a small plane to the town of Fort Yukon, and then on to the tiny post of Chalkyitsik, both on the Arctic Circle, along with several staff of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The trip gave **Catherine** an opportunity to see the isolation and special circumstances for many FNS program participants in Alaska.

FNS Staff:

Rather than produce a long maudlin letter I'll get right to the point. What a great and good bunch of people at FNS. Its been an absolute pleasure working with you - at national headquarters, in the regional offices and at the field offices.

Two highlights of my experience stand out; there are leaders everywhere in FNS, from the bottom up to the top down! That's the hallmark of a good organization. Second, we have generally the same management philosophy -- get the job done, but have fun!

I'm off to sow entrepreneurial seeds in the private sector. Keep up the great work, have fun, and best of luck with the challenges ahead. Perhaps we will have the opportunity to work together again.

All the very best and thanks for making my experience an excellent one.

Birge S. Watkins

Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Food and Consumer Services

[Birge will be a Managing Director of Eagle-Atlantic Investment Corporation, a new merchant bank based in Washington, D.C. and London, and a Director of Corporate Healthcare Services, Inc. of Springfield, Virginia. He will also be establishing a new government relations firm specializing in Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT).]

On the Hill...

The Census Bureau's release of new poverty figures prompted the House Select Committee on Hunger to hold a hearing yesterday to examine the inadequacies and misuse of the official poverty line as a measure of who needs food program assistance. The politics of redrawing the line proved to be an engaging topic for two panels of witnesses and for Chairman Tony Hall (D-OH).

The Census Bureau reported little change in the poverty rate for 1989--12.8 percent, or 31 million people. The real figure should be around 44 million people, Rep. Hall pronounced. Hall charged that the Census Bureau is underestimating the number of poor Americans by 13 million people and making the fight against hunger and poverty seem less urgent than it really is.

Lending support for Hall's view were witnesses Patricia Ruggles, author of Drawing the Line: Alternative Poverty Measures and Their Implications for Public Policy, William O'Hare, author of Real Life Poverty in America, and Rev. Charlie Parker, director of Bread for the City.

The godmother of the original poverty line, Mollie Orshansky, proved to be a fascinating witness as she gave a detailed and personal 35-year retrospective of her years as the civil servant alternately praised and blamed for creating "the line."

Orshansky herself illustrated why attempts to redefine poverty face heavy opposition. Having acknowledged the shortcomings of the poverty line, Orshansky proceeded to tell a surprised Rep. Hall that, as a senior citizen, she was not interested in paying higher taxes to provide welfare benefits to millions of new recipients, whether they need help or not. "You have to measure what people need against what people are willing to pay for," she exclaimed.

Rep. Hall and Committee members Rep. Bill Emerson (R-MO), Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), Rep. Bob Smith (R-OR), and Rep. Jill Long (D-IN)

also heard personal accounts from two articulate, local residents struggling to live on incomes just above the poverty line. One witness, a federal employee, pointedly complained to Committee members that Congress is apparently working hard to create millions of new poor by its inaction on the budget. On her way to a furlough rally, witness Carla Fisher effectively conveyed her disgust and kept Committee members pinned to their seats while bells calling them to the floor to vote rang in vain.



"Plan It for the Planet"

October is Energy Awareness Month. With your help, we can encourage Americans across the Nation to pause during October and focus on the value of energy to our economic prosperity and national security. "Plan It for the Planet."

EMPLOYEE PROFILE...

Cindy Price

by Darlene Barnes

I first met **Cindy Price** earlier this year at a New Employee Orientation meeting with the Administrator. She and I sat next to each other and hit it off immediately--she's just that kind of person, very warm and friendly. **Betty Jo** went around the room and asked each of us to say a little something about ourselves, AND to also let her know if we played softball because FNS was going to play HHS in an upcoming game. Well, when **Cindy** spoke up, not only did she want to play, she was dam GOOOOOOOOOOOD!!!!!!

For starters, **Cindy** played on State (Georgia) and Regional Champion Teams which won National titles ; in 1982 she was recruited to play on a semi-pro team; for 2 years she played the ever tough and popular "fast pitch" for Valdosta State College (NCAA); she lettered in high school in softball, cross country, basketball and track; and **Cindy** played every summer on recreational teams, some of which traveled all over the southeast.



Champion Form!

Photo by C. Okal

"I started playing softball when I was six years old," said **Cindy**. "Sports runs in my family--my father played football in high school, my mother was Captain of the volley ball team in college, and my brother is at Georgia Tech where he played baseball, basketball, and is now into martial arts."

When **Cindy** plays softball, behind that warm, friendly smile is an aggressive, intense softball player. During a close game in 1980, **Cindy** was playing catcher and ran for a fly ball. She collided with the pitcher, and fractured the side of the pitcher's face and broke her nose. Her response to this..."I still caught the ball!"

Cindy has had the honor of having many unique nicknames, too. Though hesitant at first, she told me she used to be called "Rosie," named after Pete Rose for always sliding into bases head first!

Many of us at FNS had a chance to see **Cindy's** awesome playing abilities when the Bertini Bombers challenged HHS's Family Support Administration. **Cindy** is not only a skillful player, but very much a team player and everyone appreciated her enthusiasm! This past summer **Cindy** played with the Gross Margins, another USDA team from the Agricultural Cooperative Service.

Cindy has not only received recognition for her outstanding athletic abilities, but also her academic achievements. **Cindy** was listed in Who's Who Among American Junior Colleges (1986) and Who's Who Among American High Students. She was on the National Dean's List from 1986-1988, and received the top award in the Political Science Department at Valdosta State College where she graduated. **Cindy** was also chosen as an "Outstanding College Student in America."

Cindy has only been with FNS since January 29, 1990, and she is already well known around POC. She is a Food Program Specialist for the Review and Analysis Section in the Program Integrity Branch of the Child Nutrition Division, and she really enjoys her job.

If you've seen **Cindy** lately with an extra big smile on her face, and a gleam in her eye, it's not from any recent softball awards, she's getting married November 17 to **John Hull**. Best of luck **Cindy**!

1000 POINTS OF LIGHT...

SWRO's Brenda Brewer Clothes the Homeless

When SWRO food program specialist **Brenda Brewer** began working during the summer of 1989 at a department store in Terrell, Tx., a small town near Dallas, she was upset to find that unsellable clothes (soiled or slightly damaged) were being cut up and destroyed. To **Brenda**, this was completely unacceptable; she saw too many homeless people on the streets of downtown Dallas every day who needed clothes.

She began to ask questions: Why were the clothes destroyed; why didn't the store, instead, donate them to a charitable organization for distribution to the poor? The answers were simple. The store management was well aware of the need and had at one time given the unsellable clothes to charities; however, when too many of the garments were brought back for refunds, the practice had had to be discontinued.

Brenda decided that she could solve this problem; she would see to it that the clothes went to the homeless, and without liability to the store. When she approached the store

manager with her plan, he quickly agreed. She would remove all store labels and price tags from the garments, see to it that the clothing was washed and mended if needed, then distribute the items to an appropriate agency.

Before long, **Brenda** was knee-deep in clothes--of all kinds. Her spare time--as well as that of her family and coworkers--became filled with this project. She sorted, mended, washed (and parceled the clothes out to others for mending and washing), then delivered them to a large homeless shelter, the Dallas Life Foundation, where they were distributed to the residents.

From November 1989 through September, **Brenda** and her team provided over \$17,000 worth of new ready-to-wear clothes--children's, men's and women's, all sizes--to the shelter. (In volume, this equates to 79 large, fully-packed boxes.) There were enough items that Dallas Life Foundation shared some of them with other homeless shelters.

Brenda has thoroughly enjoyed this project, and her enthusiasm has been contagious to the other SWRO employees who have helped her.

In discussing her involvement, she said, "This is a good example of a small effort which grew into a large

project. Those of us who worked on it have benefited tremendously. Helping others gives you a lift; it is very fulfilling. I am convinced that one person can make a difference."

At a recent appreciation ceremony at the regional office, SWRO presented a certificate of appreciation to the department store for donating the clothes. In addition, a representative of the Dallas Life Foundation was present to thank the volunteers on behalf of the homeless. And, finally, **Brenda** expressed her personal thanks by presenting a Dallas Life volunteer t-shirt to each of the 22 coworkers who had helped her in the project.

Other SWRO volunteers in the ongoing project are **Denise Bradford, Michele Bradford, Marilyn Brewster, Katie Brock, Micki Evans, Judy Glaze, Blanche Jackson, Becky Lucero, Jeannette Morris, Patty O'Malley, Bettie Pena, Ken Ray, Rita Rayson, Priscilla Schmitz, Jo Ann Slack, Anne Snell, Alan Steinsnider, Keith Steir, Betty Veasley, Beth Ann Vidmar, Ellen Wahlberg, Gwen Warren, and Kelly Yee.** Rounding out the volunteers are **Brenda's** daughter **Kimberly Good** and her grandmother **Clara Clark.**

World Food Week at USDA



October 15-19 has been designated as World Food Week at USDA. This is in conjunction with World Food Day which is October 16. World Food Day is sponsored by USDA and a U.S. National Committee for World Food Day made up of more than 425 private voluntary organizations. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations makes the following points:

- Even by conservative estimates, world population will double again to more than 10 billion people some time in the next 40 years.

- The share of world food needs that can be met by expanding cultivated land is shrinking

- Nearly all population increases will occur in developing countries -- most of which already are in a food deficit and which lie in tropical regions where agricultural resources are environmentally fragile

A special ceremony will be held on October 15 to kick-off USDA's World Food Week, and the biggest event among all the activities will be a food drive. Barrels provided from the National Capitol Food Bank will be placed in all agencies of USDA. FNS will receive two, but we're not sure of the exact location as yet. "Mission Nutrition" is the theme of this drive, and everyone is encouraged to help out!

AROUND THE COUNTRY...

MPRO'S FRANCES KEEN RETIRES AFTER 27 YEARS OF FED SERVICE

by Joanne Widner



Photo by Craig Forman

More than 70 friends, coworkers, and former colleagues feted **Frances Keen**, MPRO's "one-person compliance section," at a retirement luncheon on September 25. Her gifts included a photo remembrance album of all the people **Frances** has worked with in the field and satellite offices around a 10-state Region, presented by Denver Field Office OIC **Irene Wise**. Turning the tables on a surprised MPRO Administrator **David Alspach** as he presented her retirement plaque, **Frances** gave him a card and gift-wrapped photos she had taken of MPRO's new Colonnade Center home.

Frances originally began her career as a World War II "government girl" at the age of 18, when she became a secretary to the U.S. Mission to Iran for the War Department. Following a "break" to complete college degrees and a private-sector stint in personnel selection and testing and market research, **Frances** returned to government with the Chicago regional office of the Consumer and Marketing Service (forerunner of FNS) to begin 22 years with our agency. Most of that time was spent in retailer/wholesaler compliance efforts for the Food Stamp Program and in training of field staff in compliance work. For the past several years, **Frances** has been a knowledgeable, dependable compliance resource for staff in the Mountain Plains Region, and her shoes will be hard to fill.

MWRO Celebrates "Fitness"

Story and Photos by Diana Pihos

For MWRO, September 13 was a day of rollicking fun, of employee camaraderie and of healthy competitiveness. It was the day of MWRO's "Fitness Fest."

The MWRO, along with the Chicago Field Office, divided into four teams, each with their own colored t-shirt. The morning began with aerobics, a reverse correspondence typing race called Memo Madness and a dessert contest (this was expressly included to stress the fitness theme). In addition, Blue Cross/Blue Shield tested employees for blood pressure, blood cholesterol, diabetes and sickle cell anemia. The morning was then rounded out by a belly dancing lesson and contest which proved to be the hit of the day.

In the afternoon, everyone trekked to a nearby park to begin the races - a two-mile individual running and walking race, along with a team walking relay. Then came lunch, complete with a salad and just in case we felt too healthy, fried chicken and desserts from the earlier dessert contest. Volleyball and bingo (another fitness-stressing activity) followed. The final events of the day included picnic games (you know, the embarrassing kind). These included the wheelbarrow race, balloon stomp, water balloon toss and the carry-the-water-on-a-spoon (for lack of a better name) race.

In the race for the Administrator's Cup, with FNS stardom awaiting, it was the team from Food Stamp's that prevailed.



Tony Saldukas prevails over Kevin Condon in the 2-mile race



Nancy Smith taught the art of belly dancing



The popular wheelbarrow race

MWRO Helps Illinois Kick-off School Breakfast Week

by *Diana Pihos*

Photo by *Lawrence Rudmann*

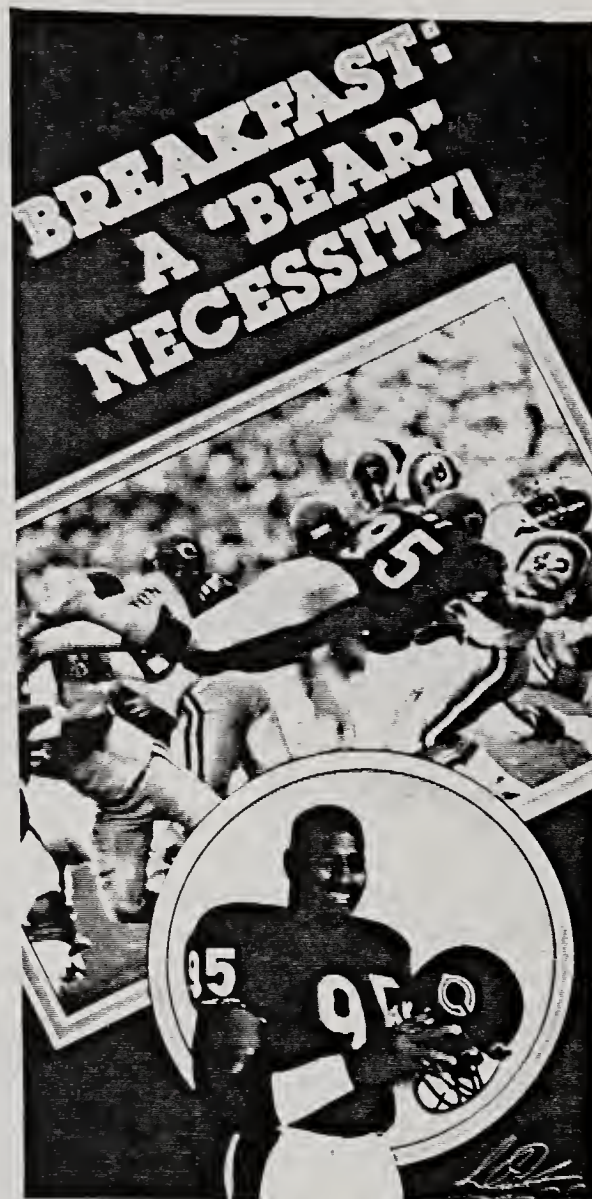
MWRO Regional Administrator **Monroe Woods**, Public Affairs Director **Lawrence Rudmann** and Child Nutrition Specialists **Rich Rotunno** and **Todd Barrett** participated in the kick-off of Illinois' School Breakfast Week (September 24 - 28) by eating breakfast at Dirksen Elementary School in Chicago (IL).

Present at the breakfast were Illinois State Superintendent of Schools **Robert Leininger** and Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools **Ted Kimbrough**.

"The School Breakfast Program is serving more than 102,000 school breakfast per day," said State Superintendent **Leininger**, "and helps children to start the day with energy to learn."

Highlights of the week included a television promotion featuring the Air Force stunt team, the Blue Angels, and a poster with Chicago Bears' football star **Richard Dent** informing school children that "Breakfast is a Bear Necessity." Schools across the State received the posters of Dent and a variety of suggested activities to help celebrate Breakfast Week.

Regional Administrator **Woods** commended the Illinois State Board of Education for their creativity and dedicated work in promoting child nutrition programs.



PROGRAM NEWS...

USDA Releases Study on WIC Prenatal Participation and Savings to Medicaid

by *Phil Shanholtzer*

A new study has provided striking new evidence that women who participate in WIC during their pregnancies have larger, healthier babies, and that medical care costs are substantially reduced for both mothers and babies during the first 60 days of a child's life.

The study, conducted for the Office of Analysis and Evaluation by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., looked at Medicaid costs, WIC participation and birth records in 105,000 births in Florida, Texas,

North Carolina, South Carolina and Minnesota. It found fewer premature babies, birthweight increases of between 51 grams (in Minnesota) and 117 grams (in North Carolina), and lower Medicaid costs for mothers who participated in WIC during their pregnancies.

Janet Tognetti of OAE, who is working with the study, cautioned that the results were specific to the five states and that nationwide conclusions can't be drawn yet. But "the trends were clear" in showing WIC's effectiveness, **Tognetti** said.

The study showed that a dollar spent today on extra food and medical attention for pregnant women under WIC may save as much as

\$3.13 later in reduced medical costs for the mother and her new baby.

The savings ranged from \$1.77 in Florida to \$3.13 in North Carolina. For newborns alone, the savings were even higher, ranging from \$2.84 to \$3.90 in Texas and North Carolina.

The study, begun in September of 1988, was mandated by the Commodity Distribution Reform Act and WIC Amendments of 1987, and by the Joint Resolution Continuing Appropriation for FY 1988. A second volume of the report, providing additional data and analysis, is due out in about six weeks, **Tognetti** said.

Food Stamps

Employment and Training Plans

Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T) plans submitted by 53 State agencies were reviewed during the month of September. The plans enable the State agencies to operate their E&T programs through FY 1991. Thirty three plans were fully approved and twenty through October, with full approval pending clarification or changes of certain items.

Federal E&T costs are expected to rise to \$165 million, a 1% increase over FY 1990 spending. This includes \$38 million to reimburse participants for transportation and dependent care expenses incurred as a result of their participation.

States expect to make 1.3 million placements into E&T components. Job search remains the most utilized component, with job search training and education components rising in prominence as States strive to improve the effectiveness of their programs.

Other...

- **Birge Watkins** gave a series of speeches on EBT at the Ninth Annual Corporate Electronic Payments Conference in Newark, NJ, sponsored by White Papers Incorporated. About 300 people attended.

- Minnesota's first-of-its-kind food stamp cash-out effort for expedited food stamp issuance got underway early September in four counties. Eight other counties will also begin issuing cash instead of food stamps for the first half of a month's expedited food stamps. Full statewide implementation is set for early calendar year 1991.

Special Nutrition

- The first meeting of the General Advisory Board for the National Food Service Management Institute met September 25 through 27, 1990 at FNS HQs. The meeting, organized and chaired by **Dr. Jeanette Phillips**, Acting Executive Director, from the University of Mississippi, is expected to begin to define a comprehensive long range plan for the Congressionally mandated Institute.

Extra...

- HNIS has sent the 1987-1988 nationwide Food Consumption Survey data tape to the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) for public release October 1. NTIS serves as a dissemination center for federal technical information and will provide the data tape to the public for a fee.

FROM THE HEALTH UNIT...

Dr. James Burris Gives Helpful Tips

On September 25 Dr. James Burris talked with FNS employees about blood pressure. Blood pressure is the force of your blood against the walls of your arteries, **Dr. Burris** explained. It's normal for the blood pressure to fluctuate high when you wake up or when you're nervous or excited, and low during rest or sleep. That's why it takes more than one reading to determine the blood pressure that's normal for your.

If you smoke, are over weight, or diabetic, or have a history of heart disease your blood pressure may vary from the norm--this is why your doctor can tell you what's normal for you. A safe blood pressure is 100/60 to 140 /90 for a healthy adult between the ages of 18-45.

Tips

1. Watch your diet
2. Cut down on salt
3. Have a low fat diet
4. Regular exercise or even walking 3 to 4 times week
5. See your doctor before starting on a diet or exercising program

See Nurse **Perkey** in Room 218 for literature on diets, walking and more information. She will be doing blood pressure checks in the Health Unit - Oct. 9, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Reminders...

- If you are interested in participating in Weight Watchers, please call the Health Unit, 756-6000. We need at least 20 to hold a class.

- Sign up for Flu Shots in the Health Unit. These will be given October 26 and 30.

- Sign up for Lunch Bunch Walkers too!



Fall Colors to be Bright

This should be a good year for viewing fall color, says **Stanley Krugman**, fall color expert with the Forest Service. Colors should be quite brilliant, **Krugman** says, especially in the east and the south. Leaf watchers can call USDA for an update on peak color areas by calling (202) 475-3730, the Forest Service Fall Color Hotline.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
• Clerk Typist	(A-LCA)	GS-0322	3/4	10/09/90	90-103	OGAPI
• Personnel Officer	(A)	GS-0201	12	10/09/90	90-113	SERO
• Supvry. Prog. Analyst	(A)	GS-0345	14	10/29/90	90-114	OAE
• Home Economist	(A-LCA)	GS-0493	5/7	10/16/90	90-H-115	HNIS
• Secretary Typing	(A-LCA)	GM-0318	5	10/15/90	90-116	SFPD
• Secretary Typing	(A-LCA)	GS-0318	3/5	10/15/90	90-117	FDD
• Program Analyst	(A)	GS-0345	9/12	10/15/90	90-118	OAE
• Budget Analyst	(A-LCA)	GS-0560	7	10/15/90	90-119	BUD
• Accountant	(A-LCA)	GS-0510	7	10/22/90	90-120*	ACD
• Systems Accountant	(A-LCA)	GS-0510	9	10/22/90	90-120A*	ACD
• Financial Management Assistant	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0503	5	10/17/90	90-121**	GMO
• Home Economist	(HNIS-W)	GM-0493	13	10/23/90	91-H-01	HNIS

* - Position will be filled as an Accountant or a Systems Accountant

** - Upward Mobility Program

OFFICE LOCATION

SERO	- Southeast Region
BUD	- Budget Division
HNIS	- Human Nutrition Information Service
OAE	- Office of Analysis and Evaluation
FDD	- Food Distribution Division
SFPD	- Supplemental Food Programs Division
ACD	- Accounting Division
GMO	- Grants Management Office
OGAPI	- Office of Govt Affrs & Pub Info

AREA OF CONSIDERATION

(A)	All Sources
(A-LCA)	- All Sources-Local Commuting Area
(FNS-HQ)	- Food and Nutrition Service Headquarters wide
(HNIS-W)	- Human Nutrition Information Service wide



New Arrival

Colleen Ann Ring, born Sept 25 to **Betsy** (Office of the Secretary) and **John Ring**

Darlene L. Barnes, Editor
David K. Warner, Desktop Designer
Pam Faith, Photography

The Friday Letter is published every two weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update your mailing address or to alter the number of copies you receive, please mail your changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 819, Alexandria, Virginia, 22302, Telephone 756-3286.

Upcoming Events...

OCTOBER

9	Blood Pressure Clinic
10	International Potluck Luncheon
11	"The Job Search Seminar" 4th floor Conference Room - Call x3471 or x3730 to register
14-20	National School Lunch Week
16	Luncheon for Carol Naughton
15-19	World Food Week
"	American Dietetics Assoc. meeting Denver, Colorado
26-30	Flu Shots, call 756-6000
All Month	Energy Awareness Month